

The Scandinavian Baltic Crusades 1100 1500 Men At Arms

Crusades covers seven hundred years from the First Crusade (1095-1102) to the fall of Malta (1798) and draws together scholars working on theatres of war, their home fronts and settlements from the Baltic to Africa and from Spain to the Near East and on theology, law, literature, art, numismatics and economic, social, political and military history. Routledge publishes this journal for The Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East. Particular attention is given to the publication of historical sources in all relevant languages - narrative, homiletic and documentary - in trustworthy editions, but studies and interpretative essays are welcomed too. Crusades appears in both print and online editions.

Osprey's study of Teutonic Knights from 1190 to 1561. The Military Order of Teutonic Knights was one of the three most famous Crusading Orders; the others being the Templars and the Hospitallers. Like these two, the Teutonic Knights initially focused upon the preservation of the Crusader States in the Middle East. Wielding their swords in the name of their faith, the crusading knights set out to reclaim Jerusalem. Unlike the Templars they survived the crises of identity and purpose which followed the loss of the last Crusader mainland enclaves in the late thirteenth century and, like the Hospitallers, they managed to create a new purpose - and a new field of combat - for themselves. Whereas the Hospitallers focused their energies in the eastern Mediterranean battling against Muslim armies, the Teutonic Knights shifted their efforts to the Baltic, to the so-called Northern Crusades against pagan Prussians and Lithuanians and, to a lesser extent, against Orthodox Christian Russia. As a result the Order of Teutonic Knights became a significant power, not only in the Baltic but in north-central Europe as a whole. Paradoxically, however, it was their fellow Catholic Christian Polish neighbours who became their most dangerous foes, breaking the Order's power in the mid-fifteenth century. The Teutonic Knights lingered on in what are now Estonia and Latvia for another century, but this was little more than a feeble afterglow. This title will examine this fascinating military and religious order in detail, revealing the colourful history of the crusades within Europe itself which inexorably changed the future of the continent.

What is the relationship between the medieval crusades and the problems of the modern Middle East? Were the crusades the Christian equivalent of Muslim jihad? In this sweeping yet crisp history, Thomas F. Madden offers a brilliant and compelling narrative of the crusades and their contemporary relevance. Placing all of the major crusades within their social, economic, religious, and intellectual environments, Madden explores the uniquely medieval world that led untold thousands to leave their homes, families, and friends to march in Christ's name to distant lands. From Palestine and Europe's farthest reaches, each crusade is recounted in a clear, concise narrative. The author gives special attention as well to the crusades' effects on the Islamic world and the Christian Byzantine East.

Step into the violent world of the 13th century, where the European states of the Levant battled with Muslim powers for control of Jerusalem. At the cutting edge of the conflict were the elite fighting men of the Crusader and Egyptian armies – the Knights Templar and the Mamluks, respectively. The Templars were the most famous and formidable of the European Military Orders, while the Mamluks were a slave caste whose fighting prowess had elevated them to the point of holding real political power, threatening their Ayyubid masters who relied on them so desperately for military success. This book draws on the latest research to tell the story of three key engagements from the Fifth Crusade to the Seventh Crusade. It reveals the extraordinary ferocity with which these battles were fought, and how the struggle between Templar and Mamluk came to shape the political future of the region.

This volume addresses the history of saints and sainthood in the Middle Ages in the Baltic

Region, with a special focus on the cult of saints in Russia, Prussia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, and Latvia (Livonia). Essays explore such topics as the introduction of foreign (and "old") saints into new regions, the creation of new local cults of saints in newly Christianized regions, the role of the cult of saints in the creation of political and lay identities, and the potential role of saints in times of war.

The history of Poland is a fascinating story of a people struggling to achieve nationhood in the face of internal and external conflict. Poland became a unified Christian state in AD 966 and by the 12th century a knightly class had emerged a force that was integral to the defence of Poland against increasingly frequent foreign invasions. Intent on crushing rival Christian states, the Templars, Hospitallers and Teutonic Knights all mounted attacks but were beaten back by the Poles, as were invading Mongols and Turks. This book reveals the organisation, equipment and battle histories of the medieval Polish armies as they developed and modernised to emerge as one of the dominant powers of Eastern Europe.

The Crusader World is a multidisciplinary survey of the current state of research in the field of crusader studies, an area of study which has become increasingly popular in recent years. In this volume Adrian Boas draws together an impressive range of academics, including work from renowned scholars as well as a number of thought-provoking pieces from emerging researchers, in order to provide broad coverage of the major aspects of the period. This authoritative work will play an important role in the future direction of crusading studies. This volume enriches present knowledge of the crusades, addressing such wide-ranging subjects as: intelligence and espionage, gender issues, religious celebrations in crusader Jerusalem, political struggles in crusader Antioch, the archaeological study of battle sites and fortifications, diseases suffered by the crusaders, crusading in northern Europe and Spain and the impact of Crusader art. The relationship between Crusaders and Muslims, two distinct and in many way opposing cultures, is also examined in depth, including a discussion of how the Franks perceived their enemies. Arranged into eight thematic sections, The Crusader World considers many central issues as well as a large number of less familiar topics of the crusades, crusader society, history and culture. With over 100 photographs, line drawings and maps, this impressive collection of essays is a key resource for students and scholars alike.

The ancient warrior code which persisted in medieval Christian Europe dictated that a man's greatest virtues were physical strength, skill at arms, bravery, daring, loyalty to the chieftain and solidarity within the tribe. The primitive Church had been diametrically opposed to such ideals, however by the early 8th century the Church had grown wealthy, and the Saracen invasions of Spain and France posed a threat to that wealth. The Roman Church began to support war in defence of the faith, and by channelling the martial spirit into the service of God, the brutal warrior of the past was transformed into a guardian of society.

Osprey's Campaign title for The battle of Lake Peipus, which took place in 1242 between the Teutonic Knights and the Russian city-state of Novgorod, led by its inspirational leader Alexandre Nevskii. The Teutonic Knights were a powerful military order, backed with the crusading zeal of Europe, the blessing of the Pope and the support of the Holy Roman Emperor. This battle, although little-known in the west, was important in the history of the medieval eastern crusades, the Teutonic defeat having a serious effect on future events. David Nicolle's excellent text examines the Crusade against Novgorod and the fierce fighting around the frozen shores of Lake Peipus.

The Bulgars were a Turkic people who established a state north of the Black Sea. In the late 500s and early 600s AD their state fragmented under pressure from the Khazars; one group moved south into what became Bulgaria, but the

rest moved north during the 7th and 8th centuries to the basin of the Volga river. There they remained under Khazar domination until the Khazar Khanate was defeated by Kievan Russia in 965. In the 1220s they managed to maul Genghis Khan's Mongols, who returned to devastate their towns in revenge. By the 1350s they had recovered much of their wealth, but they were caught in the middle between the Tatar Golden Horde and the Christian Russian principalities. They were ravaged by these two armies in turn on several occasions between 1360 and 1431. A new city then rose from the ashes – Kazan, originally called New Bulgar – and the successor Islamic Khanate of Kazan resisted the Russians until falling to Ivan the Terrible in 1552. The costumes, armament, armour and fighting methods of the Volga Bulgars during this momentous period are explored in this fully illustrated study.

ALSO AVAILABLE TO BUY AS AN E-BOOK. The original forced conversion of pagan Livonia, what is now the Baltic states of Latvia and Estonia, was carried out by a military order known as the Brethren of the Sword. In 1236 this order was incorporated into the Teutonic Knights following a catastrophic military defeat. The knights had always consolidated their conquests through networks of castles and fortified places, and the Livonian Chapter of the Teutonic Order built castles of stone. This title covers the developmental and operational history of these fortresses over the length of the Middle Ages. It details how the Baltic fortifications of the Teutonic Knights evolved to reflect the changing nature of siege warfare and the increasing dominance of gunpowder in warfare.

The Scandinavian Baltic Crusades 1100–1500 Osprey Publishing

Osprey Men-at-Arms: A Celebration is a very special volume detailing some of the wonderful artwork that has graced Osprey's renowned Men-at-Arms series over the last forty years. Beautifully presented in luxurious cloth, embossed and foil blocked, with head and tails bands and a ribbon bookmark, the collection contains the most treasured illustrations from the vast archives of this respected series and is a classic, collectable item for all military history enthusiasts.

By the 11th century the French King had lost control of border regions, while local warfare had grown alarmingly frequent. In fact the energies of the French military élite were now focused on petty internal squabbles and external adventures like the Norman conquest of England. Nevertheless, the population and economy both expanded, although it was not until the 12th century that the crown rebuilt its power-base. Despite its slow start when compared with neighbours like England, the Kingdom of France had, by the 13th century, risen to become the most powerful state in Western Europe. This title describes the organisation, history and tactics of French medieval armies.

On October 10, 1066 came the last successful invasion of England, when William the Conqueror and his troops faced the Anglo-Saxon army of Harold Godwinson. Within 6 hours Harold was slain and his country lost. However, it was to be fully 2 centuries before Anglo-Norman kings would penetrate that wild interiors of Wales and Scotland, and still more centuries were to pass before Scotland, Wales, and

England were united beneath one crown.

"The Popes and the Baltic Crusades" examines the formulation of papal policy on the crusades and missions in the Baltic region in the central Middle Ages and analyses why and how the crusade concept was extended from the Holy Land to the Baltic region.

This volume brings together a selection of the papers on the theme of the Papacy and the Crusades, delivered at the 7th Congress of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East. After the introduction by Michel Balard, the first papers examine aspects of crusader terminology. The next section deals with events and perceptions in the West, including papers on the crusades against the Albigensians and Frederick II, and on the situation in the Iberian peninsula. There follow studies on relations between crusaders and the local populations in the Byzantine world after 1204 and Frankish Greece, and in Cilician Armenia, while a final pair looks at papal interventions in Poland and Scandinavia.

The 'Northern Crusades', inspired by the Pope's call for a Holy War, are less celebrated than those in the Middle East, but they were also more successful: vast new territories became and remain Christian, such as Finland, Estonia and Prussia. Newly revised in the light of the recent developments in Baltic and Northern medieval research, this authoritative overview provides a balanced and compelling account of a tumultuous era.

A fundamental reassessment of Christian/Islamic relations during the First Crusade, combating its representation as an inter-faith clash of civilizations.

By the mid-twelfth century the lands on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea, from Finland to the frontiers of Poland, were Catholic Europe's final frontier: a vast, undeveloped expanse of lowlands, forest and waters, inhabited by peoples belonging to the Finnic and Baltic language groups. In the course of the following three centuries, Finland, Estonia, Livonia and Prussia were incorporated into the Latin world through processes of conquest, Christianisation and settlement, and brought under the rule of Western monarchies and ecclesiastical institutions.

Lithuania was left as the last pagan polity in Europe, yet able to accept Christianity on its own terms in 1386. The Western conquest of the Baltic lands advanced the frontier of Latin Christendom to that of the Russian Orthodox world, and had profound and long lasting effects on the institutions, society and culture of the region lasting into modern times. This volume presents 21 key studies (2 of them translated from German for the first time) on this crucial period in the development of North-Eastern Europe, dealing with crusade and conversion, the establishment of Western rule, settlement and society, and the development of towns, trade and the economy. It includes a classified bibliography of the main works published in Western languages since World War II together with an introduction by the editor.

Acre and its Falls analyses a wide range of aspects of the history of Acre across the crusader period, combining political, military and cultural history, with a notable emphasis on the memory of the city in Europe.

While Scandinavia's 'Viking Age' is one of the most studied aspects of early medieval history, much less has been published about the centuries that followed. Yet the armies of Sweden, Norway and Denmark offer fascinating differences from the rest of medieval Western Europe, both in their organisation and their war gear - due partly to their remoteness, climate and terrain, but partly to their long freedom from the feudal system of other kingdoms. This book explains the special nature of Scandinavian armies, shaped by the relative weakness of kings and aristocrats, and the contrasts between the separate nations of the North.

The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Christianity takes as its subject the beliefs, practices, and institutions of the Christian Church between 400 and 1500AD. It addresses topics ranging from early medieval monasticism to late medieval mysticism, from the material wealth of the Church to the spiritual exercises through which certain believers might attempt to improve their souls. Each chapter tells a story, but seeks also to ask how and why 'Christianity' took particular forms at particular moments in history, paying attention to both the spiritual and otherworldly aspects of religion, and the material and political contexts in which they were often embedded. This Handbook is a landmark academic collection that presents cutting-edge interpretive perspectives on medieval religion for a wide academic audience, drawing together thirty key scholars in the field from the United States, the UK, and Europe. Notably, the Handbook is arranged thematically, and focusses on an analytical, rather than narrative, approach, seeking to demonstrate the variety, change, and complexity of religion throughout this long period, and the numerous different ways in which modern scholarship can approach it. While providing a very wide-ranging view of the subject, it also offers an important agenda for further study in the field.

In *Visual Culture and Politics in the Baltic Sea Region*, Kersti Markus examines how visual rhetoric was used by the Danish rulers as an instrument in establishing supremacy in the region during the Baltic crusades.

Christianity and European-style monarchy—the cross and the scepter—were introduced to Scandinavia in the tenth century, a development that was to have profound implications for all of Europe. Cross and Scepter is a concise history of the Scandinavian kingdoms from the age of the Vikings to the Reformation, written by Scandinavia's leading medieval historian. Sverre Bagge shows how the rise of the three kingdoms not only changed the face of Scandinavia, but also helped make the territorial state the standard political unit in Western Europe. He describes Scandinavia's momentous conversion to Christianity and the creation of church and monarchy there, and traces how these events transformed Scandinavian law and justice, military and administrative organization, social structure, political culture, and the division of power among the king, aristocracy, and common people. Bagge sheds important new light on the reception of Christianity and European learning in Scandinavia, and on Scandinavian history writing, philosophy, political thought, and courtly culture. He looks at the

reception of European impulses and their adaptation to Scandinavian conditions, and examines the relationship of the three kingdoms to each other and the rest of Europe, paying special attention to the inter-Scandinavian unions and their consequences for the concept of government and the division of power. *Cross and Scepter* provides an essential introduction to Scandinavian medieval history for scholars and general readers alike, offering vital new insights into state formation and cultural change in Europe.

Remembering the Crusades and Crusading examines the diverse contexts in which crusading was memorialised and commemorated in the medieval world and beyond. The collection not only shows how the crusades were commemorated in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but also considers the longer-term remembrance of the crusades into the modern era. This collection is divided into three sections, the first of which deals with the textual, material and visual sources used to remember. Each contributor introduces a particular body of source material and presents case studies using those sources in their own research. The second section contains four chapters examining specific communities active in commemorating the crusades, including religious communities, family groups and royal courts. Finally, the third section examines the cultural memory of crusading in the Byzantine, Iberian and Baltic regions beyond the early years, as well as the trajectory of crusading memory in the Muslim Middle East. This book draws together and extends the current debates in the history of the crusades and the history of memory and in so doing offers a fresh synthesis of material in both fields. It will be essential reading for students of the crusades and memory.

Wielding their swords in the name of their faith, the crusaders originally set out to reclaim Jerusalem and its surrounding territory in the Middle East. Increasingly, however, Eastern Europe and the last remaining bastions of pagan Europe became the targets of their religious zeal. The era officially began in 1147, when the Saxons, Danes, and Poles, responding to Pope Eugene III's call, initiated a crusade against the Wends of the Southern Baltic. This was followed by crusades against the Livonians, Estonians, Finns, Prussians, and Lithuanians. By the 13th century much of the responsibility for sustaining these crusades fell to the Teutonic Knights, a military order formed in the Holy Land in 1190. They were aided by the constant support of the Roman pontiff and by a steady flow of mercenaries from throughout Christendom. The subsequent Scandinavian campaigns laid the foundations of modern Baltic society by destroying pagan rural farming settlements, and establishing fortified Christian towns and major castles. As with the majority of crusades, the prospective acquisition of land and power was the one of the key driving forces behind these bloody military expeditions. This book reveals the colorful history of these Crusades when the soldiers of the Pope fought their way across Eastern Europe and inexorably changed the future of the continent.

Covering the period from the fall of the Roman Empire through to the beginnings

of the Renaissance, this is an indispensable volume which brings the complex and colourful history of the Middle Ages to life. Key features: * geographical coverage extends to the broadest definition of Europe from the Atlantic coast to the Russian steppes * each map approaches a separate issue or series of events in Medieval history, whilst a commentary locates it in its broader context * as a body, the maps provide a vivid representation of the development of nations, peoples and social structures. With over 140 maps, expert commentaries and an extensive bibliography, this is the essential reference for those who are striving to understand the fundamental issues of this period.

Medieval romances with their magic fountains, brave knights, and beautiful maidens have come to stand for the Middle Ages more generally. This close connection between the medieval and the romance has had consequences for popular conceptions of the Middle Ages, an idealized fantasy of chivalry and hierarchy, and also for our understanding of romances, as always already archaic, part of a half-forgotten past. And yet, romances were one of the most influential and long-lasting innovations of the medieval period. To emphasize their novelty is to see the resources medieval people had for thinking about their contemporary concern and controversies, whether social order, Jewish/ Christian relations, the Crusades, the connectivity of the Mediterranean, women's roles as mothers, and how to write a national past. This volume takes up the challenge to 'think romance', investigating the various ways that romances imagine, reflect, and describe the challenges of the medieval world.

'God wills it, God wills it' - this was the response to the sermon of Pope Urban II at Clermont in 1095, in which he exhorted his audience to take the cross and liberate Jerusalem. And his words spread, even to the remotest islands in the north of Christendom. For the first time since the mid-nineteenth century, historians have investigated Latin, Danish, German, and Russian source materials about the Danish Crusades in the Baltic region. This team of four Danish medievalists describe how the idea of crusading reached the North and how Scandinavia became involved in the Western European crusading movement. Crusading ideology inspired Danish wars for hundreds of years against the Wends, Prussians, Lithuanians, Estonians and other pagan peoples along the coasts of the Baltic Sea so that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Denmark became the dominant crusading power in the region: a Jerusalem in the North. Indeed, crusading remained an important political reality in Denmark until the Lutheran Reformation in the early seventeenth century. Ane L. Bysted holds a Ph.D. from the University of Southern Denmark with a dissertation on the development of the crusade indulgence, and has written on crusade theology and preaching. Carsten Selch Jensen is Associate Professor in Church History at the University of Copenhagen. Has written on crusading history, especially in the Baltic Region as well as on holy and just war in the Middle Ages. Kurt Villads Jensen is Associate Professor in Medieval History at the University of Southern Denmark and chair of the Medieval Centre. He has written on Christian mission

and crusades, especially in the Baltic region and Iberia. John H. Lind has written extensively on the Baltic crusades and on relations between Scandinavia, Finland and Russia from the Viking Age up to modern times.

The Fifth Crusade represented a cardinal event in early thirteenth-century history, occurring during what was probably the most intensive period of crusading in both Europe and the Holy Land. Following the controversial outcome of the Fourth Crusade in 1204, and the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, Pope Innocent III's reform agenda was set to give momentum to a new crusading effort. Despite the untimely death of Innocent III in 1216, the elaborate organisation and firm crusading framework made it possible for Pope Honorius III to launch and oversee the expedition. The Fifth Crusade marked the last time that a medieval pope would succeed in mounting a full-scale, genuinely international crusade for the recovery of the Holy Land, yet, despite its significance, it has largely been neglected in the historiography. The crusade was much more than just a military campaign, and the present book locates it in the contemporary context for the first time. *The Fifth Crusade in Context* is of crucial importance not only to better understand the organization and execution of the expedition itself, but also to appreciate its place in the longer history of crusading, as well as the significance of its impact on the medieval world.

Coats of arms were at first used only by kings and princes, then by their great nobles, but by the mid-13th century arms were being used extensively by the lesser nobility, knights and those who later came to be styled gentlemen. In some countries the use of arms spread even to merchants, townspeople and the peasantry. From the mundane to the fantastic, from simple geometric patterns to elaborate mythological beasts, this fascinating work by Terence Wise explores the origins and appearance of medieval heraldic devices in an engagingly readable style accompanied by numerous illustrations including eight full page colour plates by Richard Hook.

A Chronology of the Crusades provides a day-by-day development of the Crusading movement, the Crusades and the states created by them through the medieval period. Beginning in the run-up to the First Crusade in 1095, to the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and ending with the Turkish attack on Belgrade in 1456, this reference is a comprehensive guide to the events of each Crusade, concentrating on the Near East, but also those Christian expeditions sanctioned by the Papacy as 'Crusades' in the medieval era. As well as clashes between Christians and Muslims in the Latin States, Timothy Venning also chronicles the Albigensian Crusade, clashes in Anatolia and the Balkans and the Reconquista in the Iberian Peninsula. Both detailed and accessible, this chronology draws together material from contemporary Latin/Frankish, Byzantine and Arab/Muslim sources with assessment and explanation to produce a readable narrative which gives students an in-depth overview of one of the most enduringly fascinating periods in medieval history. Including an introduction by Peter Frankopan which summarises and contextualises the period, this book is an essential resource for students and academics alike.

This volume represents a major contribution to the history of the Northern Crusades

and the Christianization of the Baltic lands in the Middle Ages, from the beginnings of the Catholic mission to the time of the Reformation. The subjects treated range from discussions of the ideology and practice of crusade and conversion, through studies of the motivation of the crusading countries (Denmark, Sweden and Germany) and the effects of the crusades on the countries of the eastern Baltic coast (Finland, Estonia, Livonia, Prussia and Lithuania), to analyses of the literature and historiography of the crusade. It brings together essays from both established and younger scholars from the western tradition with those from the modern Baltic countries and Russia, and presents in English some of the fruits of the first decade of historical scholarship and dialogue after the collapse of the Iron Curtain. The depth of treatment, diversity of approaches, and accompanying bibliography of publications make this collection a major resource for the teaching of the Baltic Crusades.

Nordic Elites in Transformation, c. 1050-1250, Volume II explores the structures and workings of social networks within the elites of medieval Scandinavia to reveal the intricate relationship between power and status. Section one of this volume categorizes basic types of personal bonds, both vertical and horizontal, while section two charts patterns of local, regional and transnational elite networks from wide-scope, longitudinal perspectives. Finally, the third section turns to case-studies of networks in action, analyzing strategies and transactions implied by uses of social resources in specific micro-political settings. A concluding chapter discusses how social power in the North compared to wider European experiences. A wide range of sources and methodologies is applied to reveal how networks were established, maintained, and put to use – and how they transformed in processes of centralizing power and formalizing hierarchies. The engagement with and analysis of intriguing primary source material has produced a key teaching tool for instructors and essential reading for students interested in the workings of medieval Scandinavia, elite class structures, and Social and Political History more generally.

The Order of St John of the Hospital of Jerusalem (or the Hospitallers as they are better known) has existed for almost a thousand years. It was established in Jerusalem in the mid-11th century to care for Christian pilgrims and its role initially was entirely non-combatant. But, as the wars of the crusades progressed, the Order took on a military role, at first simply protecting the pilgrims and then expressed as "defending the Holy Sepulchre to the last drop of blood and fighting the infidel wherever one can find them". The military arm of the Order quickly emerged as one of the most effective fighting forces of the era and was given responsibility for the construction and defense of several of the major fortresses of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, exercising considerable political and strategic influence. When Jerusalem and Acre fell at the end of the 13th century the Hospitallers moved to Cyprus and then established a new base in Rhodes, having taken the island by force. After two centuries there protecting Christian shipping and other interests in the region they were driven out by the Ottoman Turks and continued as a bastion of Christendom in Malta. In 1565 the Order achieved its greatest military success, beating off the massive forces of Suleiman the Magnificent in the Great Siege. They continued to be a force in the Mediterranean but finally capitulated tamely to Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798 and a much changed world. However, the Order of St John carry on their Christian work to this day with Priors all over the world, including North America, with support of the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem a key

piece of their mission. Dr Nicolle illuminates the world of the warrior Knight Hospitaller, both his training, skill at arms and campaign experience, and his beliefs and daily life at home, through centuries of religious and territorial conflict. Numerous color and black & white images support an absorbing narrative of adventure, courage and service. The Crusades were a startling and spectacular phenomenon that exerted a powerful influence on European development over a period of many centuries. Much recent writing has been devoted to explaining how the crusades began and what they achieved. This volume is intended as an introductory guide and analysis of how different aspects of crusading studies have developed. Rather than giving an account of events, each chapter offers an interpretative and historiographical study. It is aimed both at postgraduates and at professional academics.

This comparative study explores three key cultural and political spheres – the Latin west, Byzantium and the Islamic world from Central Asia to the Atlantic – roughly from the emergence of Islam to the fall of Constantinople. These spheres drew on a shared pool of late antique Mediterranean culture, philosophy and science, and they had monotheism and historical antecedents in common. Yet where exactly political and spiritual power lay, and how it was exercised, differed. This book focuses on power dynamics and resource-allocation among ruling elites; the legitimisation of power and property with the aid of religion; and on rulers' interactions with local elites and societies. Offering the reader route-maps towards navigating each sphere and grasping the fundamentals of its political culture, this set of parallel studies offers a timely and much needed framework for comparing the societies surrounding the medieval Mediterranean.

The Hanseatic League was a commercial and defensive federation of merchant guilds based in harbour towns along the North Sea and Baltic coasts of what are now Germany and her neighbours, which eventually dominated maritime trade in Northern Europe and spread its influence much further afield. The League was formed to protect the economic and political interests of member cities throughout a vast and complex trading network. The League continued to operate well into the 17th century, but its golden age was between c.1200 and c.1500; thereafter it failed to take full advantage of the wave of maritime exploration to the west, south and east of Europe. During its 300 years of dominance the League's large ships – called 'cogs' – were at the forefront of maritime technology, were early users of cannon, and were manned by strong fighting crews to defend them from pirates in both open-sea and river warfare. The home cities raised their own armies for mutual defence, and their riches both allowed them, and required them, to invest in fortifications and gunpowder weapons, since as very attractive targets they were subjected to sieges at various times.

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